

1144
EARLY RELIGION
EVIDENCED and RECOMMENDED;
BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
A SERMON,

PREACHED IN
HIGHGATE, near LONDON,

July 22d, 1792,

By EDWARD PORTER,

OCCASIONED BY THE DECEASE OF
MISS LEWIS, Daughter of the late
Capt. THOMAS LEWIS;

Who departed this Life, happy in the LORD,

JULY 8th,

Aged Seven Years and Two Months.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF FRIENDS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND

SOLD BY J. MATHEWS, No. 18, STRAND.

1792.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.]



ERRATA.

- Page 10, line 7, dele *of men*.
Page 18, line 1, instead of *in*, read *into*.
Page 27, line 3, for *by him*, read *to him*.
Page 30, line 3, after *her*, add *in her*.
Page 31, line 7, instead of *you bear*, read *bring by you here*.
Page 32, line 18, instead of *take it*, read *take taken*.

TO THE
CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING IN

THE NEW CHAPEL,

SOUTHWOOD LANE,

HIGHGATE,

NEAR

LONDON;

THE FOLLOWING SERMON,

IS,

WITH GREAT RESPECT,

INSCRIBED

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,

EDWARD PORTER.

Southwood Lane, Highgate,

August 3d, 1792.

ADVERTISEMENT.



AS the following Discourse was delivered from the pulpit in a free manner, without notes, it cannot be supposed, that every expression will be the same exactly, as when it was preached; but the substance is the same, and the expression as near as could be recovered. The Author is sensible there is nothing to recommend it to the notice of the Public, but the plain truths of God therein contained, and the happy experience of the dear child in her last moments.
——*The request of Friends; a conviction that such an instance of God's goodness should not be lost in oblivion; and a hope that the perusal of it may be blessed to some minds, are his reasons for publishing it.*

EARLY RELIGION Evidenced,

Ec. Ec.

MATT. xix. 14.

But Jesus said, Suffer little Children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE reason I address my present auditory from these words, is, the use the dear deceased child made of them a few days previous to her departure. It is right seriously to observe, and diligently to improve the dispensations of Divine Providence. The death of friends and relatives, is a loud call to survivors; we may, in a sense, say of departing friends, with a Poet and Divine of the established church,

“For *us* they languish, and for *us* they die!”

Their decease is, as it were, a divine voice, saying to us, “Prepare to meet your God.”

’ Night Thoughts,

The occasion on which the words of our text were spoken, was this ; some little children were brought to the ever blessed Jesus, that he should put his hands on them and pray. One Evangelist calls them young children¹, another infants². It is probable they were very young, not more than two or three years of age at most. Very likely they were brought by parents, guardians, or nurses, who entertained very exalted ideas of our Lord, believed in him, and received blessings from him, which rendered them desirous, that the little children should partake of the benefits, Christ so freely bestowed. And I am persuaded, Sirs, if you and I have believed in Jesus, with our hearts unto righteousness, we shall also be solicitous concerning our little ones and acquaintance, that they may be brought to receive blessings from him whom we supremely love, and delight to serve.—It is said in the verse preceding the text, the disciples rebuked them.—The disciples, though good men, whose hearts were so far influenced by divine grace, as to incline and enable them to forsake all, and follow their blessed Master ; were not-

¹ Mark x. 13.² Luke xviii. 15.

withstanding,

withstanding, grossly ignorant, in many respects, of the nature and subjects of that kingdom, which the Lord Jesus came to establish among men, till after his death and resurrection; yea till the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended upon them in the most remarkable manner, and expelled darkness from their minds.—I imagine they thought, if the custom once obtained, of bringing children to the Lord to be blessed, it would fatigue him, take up too much of his time, and keep him from performing things of more importance; mistaken men! he came to seek and to save the lost, little children as well as persons of mature age. In discoursing upon the text, we would attempt, by divine assistance, to draw your attention:

I. To the dignified character of him who spake it, “Jesus said;”

II. To the exhortation or command, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me;”

III. To the reason assigned, “For of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

1. Let us attend to the dignified character of him who spake the words under consideration; it is Jesus the Saviour of the human

race! When we contemplate him in his superior nature, we must behold him infinitely glorious! He is over all, God blessed for ever¹: possessed of all possible perfection. In his presence the brightest angels veil their faces with their wings, being dazzled with his ineffable glory²! And if the seraphic host be incapable of gazing on him with steadfast eyes, much more incapable are we of forming suitable ideas of his exalted Majesty!

Would you know what views some of the prophets had of him? Micah tells you, his "Goings forth have been from of old, "from everlasting," or from the days of eternity³: Isaiah, by the Holy Spirit, declares him to be "The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, or the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace⁴. The same inspired writer doth as it were present him to our wondering eyes, measuring the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meting out the heavens with his span, stretching them out as a curtain, and spreading them as a tent to dwell in⁵! Behold, saith he again, the nations are as a drop of a bucket,

¹ Rom. ix. 5. ² Is. vi. 2. ³ Mic. v. 2. ⁴ Is. ix. 6.

⁵ Is. xl. 12, and 22.

and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing; all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity¹. He is Jehovah², the self-existent being, who gives being to all creatures³; and keeps them in existence, by the word of his power⁴. He is the great and eternal "I AM⁵," "The first and the last⁶," "The same yesterday, and to day, and for ever⁷." Possessing all the divine attributes equally with the Father. But let us behold him in his human nature, for wonderful to tell! the same glorious Being of whom we have been attempting to speak, took upon him our nature! Yes! such was his amazing love to sinners, that he left the bosom of the Father, to dwell in the Virgin's womb! The Son of God, the Son of his nature, his love, and his likeness, became the Son of Man! "God was manifest in the flesh⁸!" The word became flesh, and dwelt among men⁹! He left the height of glory, for the depth of abasement; the summit of bliss, for the deepest misery! He

¹ Is. xl. 15, and 17.² Is. xl. 3.³ John i. 3.⁴ Heb. i. 3.⁵ Exod. iii. 14.⁶ Rev. i. 11.⁷ Heb. xiii. 8.⁸ I. Tim. iii. 16.⁹ John i. 14.

left the adoration of angels, to be blasphemed by sinful men ! “ The Prince of Life¹,” “ the Lord of Glory²,” assumed the nature of man, that he might die the ignominious death of the cross ! And viewing him as man, we must confess, he is the fairest among the sons of men ! he was perfectly free from sin, from the moment of his conception till he expired on Calvary : he was not formed in the womb, according to the common course of nature ; but by the immediate power of the Holy Spirit : the Holy Ghost came upon his Virgin-mother, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her : therefore the Holy Thing, which was born of her, is the Son of God³. And being perfectly holy, it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father. View him in his complex character, of God and Man in one person, “ Immanuel, “ God with us⁴ ;” and you will perceive him to be unspeakably glorious ! “ The “ chiefest among ten thousands⁵,” and altogether lovely ! As mediator he is full of grace and truth⁶. “ The Holy Spirit was not “ given by measure unto him⁷ : In him dwel-

¹ Acts iii. 15.² I. Cor. ii. 8.³ Luke i. 35.⁴ Matt. i. 23.⁵ Can. v. 10.⁶ John i. 14.⁷ John iii. 34.

“leth all the fulness of the godhead bodily¹,” that is perfectly, completely. We might here much enlarge, not only on the personal character of Christ, but also upon his office characters : here I might treat of him as the prophet whom the Father raised up², to teach poor ignorant sinners, and make them wise to salvation. I might hold him up to your consideration, as the high priest of our profession³, who hath made full atonement for the sins of all them, who have been or ever shall be saved, and ever liveth to intercede for and pour blessings on the helpless souls of his people. And likewise I might present him to your view in his kingly office, subduing sinners by his grace, his word, and spirit to himself, and reigning in and over them. He is the king of saints, of grace, and glory, whom the Father hath set on his holy hill of Zion⁴. I might consider the various relations, he sustains to believing sinners ; as their friend, brother, and the bridegroom of their souls ; but we must hasten,

II. To consider the exhortation or command given in our text ; and surely each of us, ought to give the utmost attention to

¹ Col. ii. 9.

² Acts iii. 22.

³ Heb. iii. 1.

⁴ Ps. ii. 6.

that which has been spoken by this glorious person; "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me."

The meaning of our blessed Lord seems to be, not merely, that children should be suffered or permitted to come, or be brought unto him; but also that all proper means should be used to encourage them to come, and to bring them to him. You clearly perceive, that circumstanced as we are, it is not possible for us to bring our little ones to Christ literally, or in the sense those highly favoured children, mentioned in our context, were brought to him; for he is now, as to his bodily presence, in heaven, where he will continue till the appointed period of his second coming; but in a moral and spiritual sense, children may now approach him, and such of us, who have the care of any, should, in this sense, endeavour to bring them to him, who is as willing to receive little ones into his protection as ever he was. But let it be observed, it is very improbable, that you who have never come to Jesus yourselves, in a spiritual sense, who have never sought to him for blessings for your own souls, will be sincerely desirous to bring your children to him. You should
seek

seek to know him, to believe in him, and to be blessed by him yourselves; then and not till then, will you be solicitous for your children to receive spiritual benefits from him. It is a lamentable consideration, that some people not only stand aloof from Christ themselves, but likewise endeavour to prevent others from seeking salvation through him. If there be any person present, whose rebellious heart hath prompted him to hinder, even a little child from hearing the gospel, and coming to Jesus in his own appointed way, let him tremble at the thought of having slighted the exhortation, and violated the command of him, who is constituted judge of all!

The Lord Jesus will shew resentment to them, who prevent children from coming to him; yet we are not to suppose that he commands them to be brought unto him, because they are amiable beings, in a moral light: no, for they are all shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin¹; they are by nature the children of wrath²; they go astray from the womb, speaking lies³: this is the testimony God bears concerning them in his

¹ Acts x. 42.

² Pf. li. 5.

³ Ephes. ii. 3.

⁴ Pf. lviii. 3.

word, and to speak in the language of inspiration, Let God be true, but every man a liar. He does not invite them to come to him, because they are lovely creatures, but to make them such; he does not take them into his arms, because they are blessed by nature, but to bless them. Some means we ought to use to endeavour to bring our children to the blessed Saviour; let us now mention them: we should dedicate them to him according to his own ordinance; we should devote them, give them up to God from their infancy: we should attempt to pray earnestly and frequently, with and for them, that the Lord would regenerate their hearts, and make them a seed to serve him. As reason dawns, as their young minds begin to open, we should teach them, as far as is in our power, the principles of our holy religion, reading and explaining the word of God to them, telling them of the total depravity of their nature, and the need they stand in of divine grace, of the willingness and ability of the Lord Jesus to save sinners, young and old. We should bring them in their early days to the public worship of God, where the gospel is preached, and the Lord's people join together in prayer and praise.

praise. Thus we ought to strive to bring them up in the way they should go, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord¹, looking to him for his blessing to attend our endeavours. Great encouragement is afforded us so to do, from the love our condescending Saviour hath manifested to little children, and by his commanding them to be brought to him. But let us now attend,

III. To the reason assigned in the text, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven." By the kingdom of heaven, in this connection, we are to understand, I apprehend, the church of Christ, under the gospel dispensation, the kingdom he came to establish among men in this world, and the church in heaven, the kingdom of glory. Our blessed Lord informs us, in these words, that the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, the members of the church on earth, and the church in glory, are partly composed of little children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," saith the meek and loving Saviour; plainly asserting, that children are members of his church, as well as persons of mature

¹ Ephes. vi. 4.

age ; for which reason he commands, that they may be permitted to come unto him, " For of such is the kingdom of heaven." The church may be called a kingdom, because it is a community, in which there is a king, possessed of supreme authority ; there are many subjects, on whom great immunities are conferred, and to whom precepts are given, for the regulation of their conduct. The king is the Lord Jesus Christ ; " My " kingdom is not of this world", said he to Pilate, intimating that he was a king, and had a kingdom, though not of this world. His kingdom is not founded on worldly principles, nor supported by worldly policy, neither is it designed for worldly grandeur ; it is of a spiritual nature, and he in his mediatorial capacity, is invested with supreme dominion ; hear what he said to his disciples after his resurrection, " All power is given " unto me in heaven and in earth²." The subjects of this kingdom, are of all ages, characters, and situations in life ; but none are of this kingdom by nature, none are admitted upon the footing of their supposed native innocence : what the Lord said to Nico-

¹ John xviii. 36.

² Matt. xxviii. 18.

demus,

demus, will remain for ever true ; “ Except
 “ a man be born again, he cannot see the
 “ kingdom of God¹,” meaning that man
 in his fallen state, cannot truly perceive or
 enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of grace
 here, and of glory hereafter, unless he be
 regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The un-
 derstanding of a sinner must be enlightened,
 the perverse will subdued, and the affections
 sanctified by divine grace, before he can
 know and relish the things, which make
 for his present peace and eternal felicity.
 Are you become subjects of this kingdom by
 regenerating grace ? Christ makes his people
 willing in the day of his power². Great are
 the privileges bestowed on them, who belong
 to this kingdom. Their sins are all for-
 given ; they have redemption through the
 blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, ac-
 cording to the riches of his grace³ : O Sirs,
 what a privilege is this ! to have all our
 iniquities cast as a stone into the great deep !
 for God to remove them from us, and re-
 member them no more for ever ! The Lord
 grant this privilege may be ours ! The
 Holy Spirit is given them to teach them,

¹ John iii. 3.² Ps. cx. 3.³ Ephes. i. 7.

and guide them in all truth¹, and to make them meet for an inheritance among the saints in light! They are made partakers of true peace, and solid joy; being justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ²! They have peace and joy in believing; yea at times they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory³! Precepts are given them to regulate their conduct by, the substance of all which is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with
 “all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and
 “with all thy mind. Thou shalt love
 “thy neighbour as thyself⁴: Whatsoever
 “ye would, that men should do to you, do
 “ye even so to them⁵.” This law is written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit: and being influenced by principles of piety and loyalty towards their God and Saviour, and of justice and benevolence toward all men; it is evident the subjects of this kingdom, are wiser, and better; holier, and happier than other men. And pray what is there irrational, absurd, or enthusiastic, in maintaining, that children, as well as others, are

¹ John xvi. 13.² Rom. v. 1.³ I. Pet. i. 8.⁴ Matt. xxii. 37, and 39.⁵ Matt. vii. 12.

of this kingdom? Cannot God find access to the human mind in any stage of life? And if he can, will he not? Seeing he hath said, "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, " and my blessing upon thine offspring¹. And it is said by the Psalmist, "Out of " the mouth of babes and sucklings, hast " thou ordained strength²." Some instances of young persons, who have been subjects of this kingdom, we will point out to you. Joseph was a pious youth, and but of tender years, when favoured with two prophetic dreams; he was but seventeen, when he brought to his father, the evil report of some of his brethren³. Samuel was young, when he began to minister unto the Lord; his precise age we cannot determine, but we know he was a child when he engaged in tabernacle service⁴. Josiah was pious betimes; he was but eight years old when he began to reign, and in the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek after the God of his father David, and soon began to purge Jerusalem from idolatry. Timothy, we are informed, from a child knew the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise

¹ If. xlv. 3.² Ps. viii. 2.³ Gen. xxxvii. 2, 5, and 9.⁴ I. Samuel iii. 1.

unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus¹. May I mention one, who has been called the English Josiah, I mean Edward the VIth. king of England, he was remarkable for his piety through his reign, though quite a youth, for he reigned near six years and a half, and died in the sixteenth year of his age. And the dear child lately departed, whose death we wish to improve, was, there is good reason to believe, a subject of divine grace, which I think you, who have experienced the power of godliness in your own hearts, will not doubt, when you hear the gracious words which dropped from her lips in her last moments.

I would just observe the church may be denominated, the “ kingdom of Heaven : ” Because it is of heavenly origin, and its king is the king of heaven ; its true members have a title to heaven, and are made meet for it. And I would here take notice, that by the “ kingdom of Heaven ” in the text, is meant, the state of glory also, to which believers are taken, when they have done with the kingdom of grace. There Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father, adored

¹ Tim. iii. 15.

by angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. There Joseph is now praising him, who was with him in, and brought him through all his afflictions! There Samuel is blessing the Lord, who called him by name, when he was a child! There Josiah is seated upon a throne, much more glorious than that of David! There Timothy is ascribing glory to God and the Lamb! who enabled him in this lower world, to lay himself out for the good of immortal souls. And there we hope and believe, the happy soul of the dear child, whose decease occasioned this discourse, is divinely employed in singing praises to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Some account of her afflictions, and her blessed experience, I will now relate to you, as communicated to me chiefly by a friend, who was an eye and ear witness. She was of a delicate tender frame, very susceptible of colds, and fevers. She was brought from school May 19th, indisposed with a rheumatic fever, which went off in about a fortnight; but symptoms of weakness continued, and within a week a fulness was perceived in her body; her face appeared rather swelled, and her breathing became shorter; and by a rapid increase of the

disease, an universal dropfy was formed. The best advice was had for her, and no means were spared for her relief. She bore her afflictions with patience and submission; and when her affectionate mother spake to her on religious subjects, she was much affected, and gave evidence of good desires. A minister was requested to pray with her, which he did frequently during her illness; speaking to her at the same time in the most suitable manner he was capable of, about the blessed Jesus, and his salvation. A few days before her departure, being asked, If she would rather live or die? She shed tears, but soon after said to her mother, “ I “ did not cry, because I am unwilling to “ die, but because I cannot take you with “ me.” She said likewise to her afflicted parent, to this effect; “ The Lord has lent “ me to you for a time, and he will take “ me again: The Lord Jesus loves children, “ and he has said, Suffer little children, “ and forbid them not to come unto me; “ for of such is the kingdom of heaven: and “ he took them into his arms, and blessed “ them.” The Wednesday night preceding her dissolution, she dreamed that she saw the blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, stand-
ing

ing by her bedside; she said, " He looked
 " glorious indeed." She saw a woman also,
 on the bed near her, in great distress. Her
 mother asked her, If she thought in her
 dream, that the Lord Jesus said any thing
 to her? Yes, replied she, " He said
 " glorious things, and things of glory, such
 " as is not in my power to relate." On
 Saturday, the day before her death, when
 she was about to be taken out in a coach
 for exercise and air, as on former occasions,
 she said to the maid, " I shall die to-night!"
 After her return, she took a medicine,
 agreeable to direction, and said, " No me-
 " dicine will do me any good; I am not
 " for this world, I am going very fast."
 As the evening came on, her breathing was
 more difficult, and laborious: it was then
 judged necessary, to scarify the legs, and
 apply blisters, in hope of obtaining some
 relief; but God, who doth all things well,
 permitted the fatal symptoms to increase,
 for reasons best known to himself, and which
 must be right, though to us short-sighted
 mortals, his ways are mysterious, and his
 judgments past finding out. She was per-
 fectly sensible of her approaching dissolution,
 and said, " I am going a long journey, com-

“ fort my mother, and make her happy !
 “ I shall not see her of a long time ; I am
 “ going to see my father, and my sister,
 “ whom I have never seen : I am going to
 “ heaven.” Observing those around her
 weeping, she said, “ Don’t cry, I am bet-
 “ ter off ! I am better off than you ! Don’t
 “ cry for me, consider where I am going !
 “ I see the light ! I see the light of glory !
 “ My Jesus has a crown ! a crown for me !
 “ I am not worthy to ask for it.” She could
 scarcely speak to be understood ; but she was
 so full of divine love and joy, that with
 strong efforts, she went on, at short intervals,
 saying, “ I am a young sinner, I am
 “ wicked ! but God is good ! I shall be
 “ good soon, I shall be very good to-mor-
 “ row ! I want to pray, Lord bless me,
 “ and bring me to glory, through Jesus
 “ Christ our Lord ! Lord bless and com-
 “ fort my mother ; bless all my good friends,
 “ Amen !” She was now much exhausted,
 it was not without great difficulty, she could
 utter her words : being desired not to fatigue
 herself so much with talking, she answered,
 “ I must speak if it does fatigue me. I
 “ shall have rest enough to-morrow. I
 “ shall be in glory to-morrow, I shall sing
 “ praises

“ praises to God the Father, Son, and
 “ Holy Ghost !” She could hardly articu-
 late her speech, but asked, as well as she
 could, If those about her understood what
 she said. Still exerting herself, she said,
 with a smiling countenance, “ My Jesus is
 “ coming ! The chariot is coming !” To
 them standing by her, she said, “ Good
 “ by ! I don’t like to say so to my mother,
 “ she will be unhappy. Bury me with my
 “ sister and mother,” meaning I suppose,
 where her mother intended to be laid, when
 time with her shall be no more. Soon she
 said, “ How long I am in going !” after a
 short pause, she said again, “ How long I
 “ am in going !” Mrs. Lewis was then
 out of the room by the intreaties of friends,
 but wished to see her dear child once more,
 and desired one to ask her, If she would like
 to see her mother again, she said, “ Yes !”
 on which she came in, took a last embrace,
 and retired. The dear child had just strength
 enough to say, “ I have seen her, I wish I
 had not ! And very soon her immortal
 soul took flight to her God and Saviour,
 who comforted her heart, whilst walking

¹ Meaning, it is supposed, the sight was too much for
 Mrs. Lewis.

through the valley of the shadow of death. She finished her short journey, of a little more than seven years, just before the clock struck one on Lord's day morning, the 8th instant. Methinks you are now saying, Let my last end be like her's ! That this discourse, and the solemn occasion of it, may with the divine blessing, conduce in some measure to that purpose, I would attempt an improvement of the same, by addressing myself to you, who are of mature years. If children may be in the kingdom of grace, it behoves you, who are some of you in the midst of, and others far advanced in life, to examine yourselves, whether you belong to this kingdom, and partake of its blessings. Death is throwing his mortal darts at one and the other ; he will soon strike you ; and if you be not in the kingdom of grace when you die, you will never be admitted into that of glory. As an inducement to you to strive to enter into, and receive the kingdom of God, let me entreat you to consider well the glory of Christ's person and offices, and the blessedness of them, who are under his gracious reign. And remember he invites, not children only, but sinners of every age and character, to become his subjects,

and

and receive his bounty. Some of the most notorious rebels, have through his grace, been subdued by him, and pardoned and received by him ! Manasseh rebelled much against him, and offered his own son a sacrifice to the Devil¹; but at last submits to a sin-pardoning God, offers himself a living sacrifice to him, and is accepted by him². And persecuting Saul, who breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord³; upon submitting to Jesus Christ, finds pardon and peace, and most gladly becomes one of their number, and a most zealous defender of the faith, which once he destroyed⁴. And Mary Magdalen, once possessed by, and subject to seven of the infernal host⁵; by the grace and power of Immanuel, is rescued from eternal ruin, and made a chaste, a humble, and diligent follower of him who came to call sinners to repentance⁶ ! And Nicodemus, a self-righteous pharisee, whose soul was as dark as midnight, when he first came to Jesus ; is by grace regenerated, and shews his love to Christ, at a time when he could not

¹ II Kings xxi. 6. ² II. Chron. xxxiii. 19. ³ Acts ix. 1.

⁴ Gal. i. 23.

⁵ Luke viii. 2.

⁶ John xx. 1.

do it without danger¹. These trophies of victorious grace, I mention to shew that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners : and hear what he himself saith to encourage such to seek salvation through him : “ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest² ; ” and again, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out³. Whatever hath kept any of you from Christ hitherto, may you be enabled to come to him now ; and prove by your own experience, that his blood cleanseth from all sin⁴ ! Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation⁵ ! Seek to receive the kingdom of God, as a little child ; so shall ye enter therein. Such of you, who have children intrusted to your care, imitate those pious persons who brought theirs to Jesus ; he is as willing to receive and bless them as ever he was. If you should be instrumental in bringing but one to him, there will be joy in heaven. And let me intreat you, my dear young Friends, to endeavour to come to Jesus ; God help you to remember your great Creator,

¹ John iii. 4, and John xix 39.² Matt. xi 28.³ John vi. 37.⁴ I. John i 7.⁵ II Cor. vi 2.

and

and loving Redeemer, in the days of your youth ! Youth is a period favourable to religion. Your corruptions are not so strong now, your passions are not so turbulent as you will find them to be, as you grow up into life ; if you be spared. Your time is not taken up with the cares and concerns which will necessarily come upon you, as you advance in age ; your minds are not yet engaged in the busy scenes of this transient world : you are at a time of life in which you have much leisure for prayer and meditation ; may your young and tender minds be much employed about God and Christ, and things heavenly and divine ! There is great encouragement for you to seek the Lord ; he hath said, in the eighth of Proverbs, “ I love them
 “ that love me ; and those that seek me early
 “ shall find me.” Be encouraged by the love our precious Jesus shewed to children, when he sojourned in this lower world ; let me now tell you as I have told the dear child who is gone to glory, the Lord Jesus loves little children. He hath said, “ Suffer little children, and
 “ forbid them not to come unto me ; for of
 “ such is the kingdom of heaven.” He took them in his arms, when he was upon earth, and blessed them. Be encouraged by her example,

ample, who has lately quitted this sinful world; it has been asserted to me, by some who beheld her dying moments, that her mind seemed so much set upon prayer and praise, that she appeared almost insensible of the pangs which it is natural to suppose must have attended her dissolution. May you be enabled to believe in and love the Lord Jesus; who became a child, that he might save and bless little children! And be obedient to your parents, and those who have the care of you, so shall you be prepared, to live well, and die happy. Who can tell but that text in Isaiah, may be fulfilled in some of you, "The child shall die an hundred years old;" the meaning of which some have thought to be that some children who shall die young under the gospel dispensation, and especially in the happy millennium, shall have as much knowledge and experience of divine things, as many who, at other times, lived till they were very old; it is added, but the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. It is the delight of my heart, at times, to speak to you little ones, about Jesus and his love; he can teach you great

¹ Is. lxx. 20.

things in a short time; may you apply to him by prayer for divine instruction! Shall I be permitted to address a few words to you, the mourning friends, and relatives of the deceased? Remember in the midst of life, you are in death: the awful occasion, which you hear this morning, speaks this language to you, "Prepare to meet your God¹: Be ye also ready²: Seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteousness³." One who was much younger than any of you, is no more, as to this world: may you seriously consider your latter end! And what shall I say to you, the disconsolate parent of the dear deceased child? I would not say any thing to open afresh the wounds which are still bleeding; but rather would I say something to afford you consolation. Your beloved daughter is taken away from the evil to come! Shall I recommend to you the example of a great and good man, David I mean? You have imitated him while your child was living; he besought God for his child, and undoubtedly made use of all proper means for his recovery, for he was much grieved; in that part of

¹ Amos iv. 12.² Matt. xxiv. 44.³ Matt. vi. 33.

his conduct you have followed him: the Lord refused to put efficacy in the means used for the restoration of his child; he has done the same respecting yours; when in the death of the child, he clearly perceived the mind and will of God, he was resigned, and arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped; and came to his own house, and did eat bread, and said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me¹." And thus he appeared chearfully serious, to the astonishment of his servants. God help you to imitate him, and to say, with good old Eli, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good²!" And with holy Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord³!" And now may he command a blessing on his own word, and sanctify this solemn opportunity to all our souls, for Christ's Sake. Amen!

¹ II. Sam. xii. 16 to 23. ² I. Sam. iii. 18. ³ Job 1. 21.



